

Magdalene College: Legacies of Enslavement

Introduction

This update is based on research undertaken by Dr M E J Hughes and Ms Alice Whitehead, funded by Magdalene College, over a period of ten weeks, between February and April 2023. It complements the 2020 report written by Dr Hughes with the assistance of Ms Mandy Marvin (Researcher), and also Dr Hughes's 2022 Report to the Governing Body on the University Legacies of Enslavement Report); and following the recommendations of the Governing Body, it explores the collections of Samuel Pepys, and the College Archives in greater depth and with specific questions in mind.

The first five weeks of the project were spent researching Samuel Pepys, including the consultation of materials in the Pepys Library, with the assistance of the Deputy Pepys Librarian, Mrs Catherine Sutherland; and the final five were spent in the Archives under the supervision of the archivist, Mrs Katy Green.

Please note that in direct quotation from historic sources, we have adopted the policy of using the wording of the original material.

The chronological parameters of the project are currently 1650-1850.

1. Samuel Pepys.

The Pepys portion of this research unearthed no further direct relationship between Pepys and slavery beyond what was already known from earlier research. See Report 1.

Pepys' work as Secretary of the Admiralty will be an avenue for further research. As Secretary, Pepys wielded a considerable level of influence and patronage over Admiralty appointments, and several of his relatives and acquaintances were posted to different parts of the empire. For example, in March 1667, he tried to get his brother-in-law, Balthasar, a posting on a voyage to the West Indies.¹ He also helped the son of a friend, Frank Turner, to obtain a job with the East India Company in the same year and gifted him a copy of 'Lex Mercatoris' ('Laws of the Merchants') for the journey.²

There are some entries from Pepys' diary which imply that he may have witnessed, or been indirectly involved with, the Royal African Company in its infancy. Historian Matthew Parker has already found that Pepys was an investor in the RAC, and entries from the diary show that Pepys regularly associated with members of the Company. The RAC was formally established in 1660 under the leadership of James, Duke of York (later King James II), who was also the Lord High Admiral. Through his connection to the Duke of York, Pepys became an ally of the RAC. In his diary, he described meetings with several RAC officials. On 23 May 1663, Pepys spoke with several RAC members and saw a draft of the Company's

¹ See diary entry for 27 March 1667.

² See diary entry for 15 December 1667.

coat of arms.³ On 13 February 1664, he visited 'Africa House', referring to the RAC's headquarters in London, and a few days later, on 18 February, he returned to Africa House and spoke with 'Sir G. Cateret and others of the African Company'.⁴ In November 1665, he dined with one 'Mr. Yard', a merchant employed by the Company and, in April 1667, he attended a meeting of the RAC.⁵ On 28 November 1667, Pepys and his colleagues tried to visit the Duke of York at Whitehall and, on finding the Duke absent, they left 'taking a copy of the Guinny Company's defence to a petition against them to the Parliament'.⁶

Although his time at Tangier is well-documented, we found additional references to Pepys' work with regard to other colonies in the *Calendar of State Papers*. For example, on 9 February 1676, it was mentioned in the minutes of a meeting of the Committee of Trade and Plantations that: 'Mr. Pepys [is] to bring in an account of provisions made ready for the negroes, and a method for their distribution, and about the course of the voyage'.⁷ This note referenced a proposed voyage to the English colony of Surinam, England's only territory in South America. The voyage was being planned by the Committee's Commissioners, and Pepys was presumably consulted in his capacity as the Admiralty Secretary (the Commissioners needed a convoy). Surinam was an English colony during the 1650s and early 1660s, but after the Treaty of Breda (1667), it came under Dutch control and the English colonists abandoned the settlement.⁸ Pepys was then involved in this expedition (possibly an evacuation) at several stages:

12th February 1676: 'Ordered, that Sir R. Southwell write to Mr. Pepys to consult the Lords of the Admiralty of what consequence in expense and loss of time that digression might be, the Lords having advice that some Dutch negro ships were designed to Surinam, whose arrival might engage the English Planters in purchasing and consequently in a stay there'.⁹

12th February 1676: 'Saml. Pepys to Sir Robt. Southwell. Having endeavoured, but without success, to wait on him, this is to tell him that he has some days since delivered to Mr. Sec. Williamson a memorial of all he has to trouble him with touching the provisions to be issued to the King's subjects in their transportation from Surinam'.¹⁰

30th October 1670: 'Intelligence given by M. Lethulier to Sam. Pepys. The Paragon Daletta, skipper Marcus Pietersen, belonging to the Lamptius of Zealand, equipped

³ See diary entry for 23 May 1663.

⁴ See diary entries for 13 February 1664 and 18 February 1664.

⁵ See diary entries for 12 November 1664 and 26 April 1667.

⁶ See diary entry for 28 November 1667.

⁷ "America and West Indies: February 1675," in *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies: Volume 9, 1675-1676 and Addenda 1574-1674*, ed. W Noel Sainsbury (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1893), 170-180. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol9/pp170-180> (accessed 13 March 2023).

⁸ The depopulation of Surinam is discussed in Pestana, Carla Gardina. *The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution, 1640-1661*. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2007, p. 196.

⁹ "America and West Indies: February 1675," in *Calendar of State Papers*, f. 434. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol9/pp170-180>. (accessed 13 March 2023).

¹⁰ *Ibid*, f. 437.

from Hamburg with 12 guns and 100 men, is bound for Surinam to do what spoil they can there.'¹¹

As Admiralty Secretary, Pepys was also involved in establishing Admiralty jurisdiction in Jamaica, which came under English control in 1660:

13th January 1685: 'Journal of Lords of Trade and Plantations. Mr. Pepys to be hastened in preparation of the clause for Sir Philip Howard's instructions touching the jurisdiction of the Admiralty in Jamaica. Sir Philip's draft instructions read...A copy of the Order of Council of 15th May, touching the supply of Jamaica with negroes, to be given to Sir Philip Howard.'¹²

21st May 1684: 'Agreed to investigate and settle the jurisdiction of the Admiralty in Jamaica on Tuesday next, the King's Law Officers, the Duke's Advocate, Sir John Werden, and Mr. Pepys to attend.'¹³

1st April 1685: 'That Samuel Pepys, Esq., Secretary of the Admiralty, order the commanders of the King's ships on the Colonial Stations to seize all foreign vessels trading with the plantations.'¹⁴

We have been unable to find any clear evidence of a direct financial relationship between Pepys' colonial interests and Magdalene College, but these notes might help to flesh out our understanding of Pepys' relationship with the Empire more generally.

2. College Archives.

This research focused on the College Registers (B/421, B/422, B/423), the Master's Private Book (C/1), College Audit Books (B/481, B/482 and B/483), Order Books (B/441), documents relating the Millington benefaction (B/493, A/32, A/33) and documents relating to the Milner benefaction (A/19).

We were unable to find any further connections associated with Visitors beyond those identified by report 1 (Neville Grenvilles/Braybrookes/Howards). However, we did identify two benefactions, the Millington Benefaction and the Milner Benefaction, that were partly funded by investments in the South Sea Company.

a) Millington Benefaction.

¹¹ "America and West Indies: October 1665," in *Calendar of State Papers*, pp. 323-326. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol5/pp323-326> (accessed 13 March 2023).

¹² "America and West Indies: January 1685," in *Calendar of State Papers*, pp. 758-765. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp758-765> (accessed 13 March 2023).

¹³ "America and West Indies: May 1684, 16-31," in *Calendar of State Papers Colonial*, pp.636-645. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol11/pp636-645> (accessed 13 March 2023).

¹⁴ "America and West Indies: April 1685," in *Calendar of State Papers*, pp. 27-38. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/colonial/america-west-indies/vol12/pp27-38> (accessed 13 March 2023).

The Millington Benefaction consisted of four annual scholarships, a fellowship and two small college livings, and was the bequest of Dr. James Millington who died in 1728. This gift was largely funded by land in Montgomeryshire, and it was intended that timber felled from these estates would fund the scholarships. However, this income was quickly supplemented by shares in the South Sea Company.

The Millington bequest was managed by trustees, mostly clergymen, who administered the bequest from Shrewsbury. Fortunately, the Stewards Accounts (B/493) have survived, giving us a detailed picture of how the money was spent. The records only seem to start in 1741, but the stock was clearly lucrative; throughout the 1740s, the benefaction entailed 'two lots' of annuities which brought in £4 of interest per year.¹⁵ In 1747, the trustees bought a further £100, followed by another lot of £100 in 1751.¹⁶ This brought the total investment in the SSC to £500.¹⁷ By the 1750s, the stock brought in between £15 and £17 a year (for context, each Millington scholarship was worth £15 annually).¹⁸ After 1757, the accounts became inconsistent, as different stewards took control and prioritised different things, meaning that some chose to record the interest on the stock whilst others did not. Mention of the South Sea shares disappeared after 1757, only to reappear late in the eighteenth century.

By 1799, the College was on bad terms with the Millington trustees. A series of letters in A/32 record that, by the 1790s, there were different trustees for the Montgomery lands and different trustees for the South Sea Annuities. This split caused administrative problems, and the original trustees lost control of the Annuities: 'no dividends can be received, therefore the benefit of that part of the trust of course is lost'.¹⁹ The result was a long case in Chancery, with delays occasioned by the fact that Magdalene Fellows were unwilling to give an indemnity to the trustees pursuing the case. The matter wasn't resolved until December 1817, so for a period of almost twenty years, the annuities were left in limbo.²⁰ The trust retained control of the annuities, which generated £50 a year in interest by the 1840s. The South Sea Company was dissolved in 1753, and the Millington shares were sold off and replaced with the more profitable consols (bonds for government debt). For over 110 years, the Millington scholarships and fellowship were funded in part by money from the South Sea Company.

When Millington died in 1728, the South Sea Company was recovering from a major stock crash and was still trafficking and trading enslaved people. The SSC withdrew from the slave trade in the 1730s but continued to trade with Spain's South American colonies until the early 1760s. After that point, the Company's primary function was the management of government debt. This means that the first Millington scholars were probably funded by profits from slavery, but, after the 1730s and 40s, the Company was associated with other financial activities.

¹⁵ Millington Benefaction, B/493, f. 24, 28.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, f. 35, 45.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, f. 44.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, f. 51, 53.

¹⁹ See William Egerton Jeffreys to the Fellows of Magdalene College, 26th September 1799. In A/33.

²⁰ The matter was resolved by a Chancery case on 22 December 1817, see A/32/1.

b) Milner Scholarships.

Thomas Milner was a vicar at Boxhill, in Sussex. When he died in 1721, he left £1000 to Magdalene College for three scholarships to support students from Haversham, Halifax and Leeds. The Master's Book shows that, in February 1752, '100lb capital in Old South Sea Annuities was purchased for the augmentations of those scholarships out of ye savings from ye estate at Stickney'. A few months later, the college purchased an additional £100 of South Sea stock, meaning that the total holding for the Milner scholarships was raised to £200.²¹ As with the Millington benefaction, South Sea shares were used to supplement the income generated by gifts of land.

Unfortunately, we could not find surviving accounts for the Milner scholarships, so it is not known for how long the scholarships were partly funded by South Sea shares. By the time that the Master authorised the investment, the South Sea Company had ceased trading enslaved people, but was still trading with the slave economies in Spain's South American colonies.

c) Donation from Sir Francis Bridgeman, c. 1718.

Amongst the papers relating to the Millington bequest was a separate bequest made to the college by Sir Francis Bridgeman.²² At the time of his death, Bridgeman owned land in Wiltshire, along with £500 of stock and a £2000 bond in the East India Company, as well as a bond worth £800 with the Royal African Company. Most of this stock went to King's College, Cambridge, but Bridgeman had family ties to Magdalene, and he originally left Magdalene a gift of fuel and part of an annual £40 stipend (he also left gifts to other Oxford colleges). A codicil made at a later date removed the gifts to Magdalene and King's and instead made Queen's College, Oxford, the chief beneficiary. However, Bridgeman's nephew and heir, Orlando Bridgeman, refused to execute this later codicil and gave the gifts back to King's and Magdalene. In 1719, Queen's College, Oxford, tried to bring a legal case against King's, Magdalene and the other colleges who had benefited from the earlier version of Bridgeman's will. It is unclear whether the case was successful or not, and we cannot find a recorded verdict. If the money did stay at Magdalene, then they did receive a small financial benefit from Bridgeman's investments in the EIC and the RAC, although the significance of these gifts was probably symbolic rather than pecuniary.

d) East India Company.

It is worth mentioning that the College Registers contained two references to investments in the East India Company. On 8 May 1752, 'it was order'd that an East India Bond should be bought out of the savings of Steeple Ashton during the vacancy of Drury's Fellowship, hereafter to be applied to the beautifying of the chapel'.²³ The bond was duly purchased the following month, costing £187 12s 7d (this amount included the commission that the college paid to Company brokers). A few pages later, there was a reference to the 'Principal & Interest on the East India Bond', which amounted to £113 11s 11d (this was the

²¹ Master's Private Book, C/1, ff. 171-172.

²² Found in A/33, dated 15 February 1719.

²³ College Register, 1675-1814. B/423, f. 751.

money that the College earned from the bond).²⁴ We were unable to locate any further references to this investment, so it is likely that the College only held the bond on a short-term basis, with the aim of funding renovations to the Chapel.

The East India Company was actively involved in slave trading from the 1620s up until 1834, when slavery was abolished in the British empire. This is an aspect of the Company's history that is not widely known, but, as the historian Richard B. Allen has shown, the EIC 'traded slaves over vast distances to supply its possessions with...workers'.²⁵ Archival evidence for the eighteenth-century is incomplete, but surviving Company records show that, between 1622 and 1772, there 42 confirmed and 28 probable slave trading voyages undertaken in the Company's name.²⁶ These voyages mostly transported enslaved people from areas in West or Southern Africa to Company possessions in the Indian Ocean.²⁷ Allen's work has found that, between the 1730s and 1750s, the Company authorised numerous large-scale trafficking missions, mostly transporting enslaved people from Madagascar and Angola; shipments often contained between 100 and 250 people but, on one occasion, they authorised a single ship to transport 600 enslaved people.²⁸ The Company withdrew from this kind of large-scale slave trading in the 1770s.

In addition, the early 1750s saw the rise of Robert Clive, known as 'Clive of India', an EIC servant who began making territorial conquests in parts of India. This marked the beginning of British colonisation in India, and although the investment predates Clive's big victory at Plassey in 1757, he had made several key incursions in 1751 that had generated a stir amongst the British press. With this in mind, the College's bond was bought at a key moment in the Company's history, and we can draw a link between this bond and profits derived from slavery and colonisation.

e) Fellows and students.

The time frame for this research did not permit a detailed study of the college's Fellows and students, but we were able to make a preliminary study of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Fellows based on lists found in the College Registers. For those Fellows with identifiable wills, there appear to have been very few connections to slavery or the Empire. For those with connections, they seemingly relate to stockholding with no direct relationship to slavery. For example, Theodore Waterland, a Founder's Fellow who died in 1764, had £720 in South Sea Stock at the time of his death. John Collman, a contemporary of Waterland's, died in 1760 with £2000 worth of South Sea Stock.

There are some connections amongst both Fellows and students that might warrant further investigation, but we have not yet been able to confirm the identities of these individuals. For example, there was a student at Magdalene in 1801 named Joseph Bushby; we think that he was probably the son of Sir Joseph Bushby (d. 1799), the Commissary General of His Majesty's Forces in Jamaica.²⁹ During the 1720s and 1730s, there was a

²⁴ Ibid, f. 754.

²⁵ Allen, Richard Blair. *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean, 1500-1850* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2014), p. 25.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 31.

²⁷ Ibid, pp. 26-27.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 30.

²⁹ College Register, 1675-1814. B/423, f. 347.

Founder's Fellow named William Beaty; this appears to have been an unusual spelling of the surname, and he may be connected with William Beaty, a slave-owner who owned a plantation in Grenada (d.1776).³⁰

We have been unable to identify any relevant connections amongst those who contributed to the New Building (aside from those outlined in the previous Legacies of Enslavement Report).

When the Chapel was restored in 1847, William Fulke Lucy (written as 'W. F. Lucy') donated to the project.³¹ According to the National Trust's interim report on slavery and colonialism, other members of the Lucy family were involved in colonial rule in India during the 1850s, so this might be worth exploring further.³²

³⁰ Ibid, f. 209. Will of William Beaty of Grenada, 13 November 1776 in the National Archives, PROB/11/1025/102.

³¹ Book of Orders, 1781-1906. B/441, f. 170.

³² Huxtable, S. A. et al, 'Interim Report on the Connections between Colonialism and Properties now in the Care of the National Trust, Including Links with Historic Slavery', [Interim Report on the Connections between Colonialism and Properties now in the Care of the National Trust Including Links with Historic Slavery](#) (accessed 24/04/2023), p. 81.